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Request for the inclusion of a supplementary item in the agenda of the sixty-fifth session

Intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services

Letter dated 15 July 2010 from the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

In accordance with rule 14 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, I have the honour to request the inclusion in the agenda of the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly of a supplementary item entitled "Intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services".

As the host country of the third ad hoc intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder meeting on an intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services (Busan, Republic of Korea, 7-11 June 2010), convened at the request of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme, where a large number of Governments agreed to establish an intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services and invited the General Assembly to take appropriate action for that purpose, the Government of the Republic of Korea, which also served as the Chair of that meeting, emphasizes the particular importance of this matter to the international community in the field of sustainable development and the environment.

In accordance with rule 20 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, this request is accompanied by an explanatory memorandum (annex I), the recommendations adopted by the representatives of Governments represented at the above-mentioned meeting entitled "Busan Outcome", which is deemed to constitute the basis for a draft resolution of the General Assembly as contained in the annex to the report of the meeting (annex II) and a draft resolution (annex III).

It would be appreciated if this note and its annexes could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly.

(*Signed*) In-kook **Park**
Permanent Representative

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Annex

Explanatory memorandum

The current science-policy interface for biodiversity and ecosystem services comprises various national and international programmes, organizations, mechanisms and processes. The biodiversity and ecosystem-related multilateral environmental agreements,[a] for example, contain provisions on scientific and technical cooperation. Their contribution to policymaking at the appropriate levels could, however, be strengthened further if an intergovernmental science-policy platform were able to provide credible, legitimate, salient and policy-relevant information for tackling changes to biodiversity and ecosystem services at all levels.

In the light of this growing recognition that there is a strong need to strengthen the science-policy interface on biodiversity and ecosystem services, under the facilitation of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), three ad hoc intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder meetings on a science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services have been organized since 2008.

The third ad hoc intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder meeting on an intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services was held in Busan, Republic of Korea, from 7 to 11 June 2010, which was convened by the Executive Director of UNEP as requested by the UNEP Governing Council and hosted by the Government of the Republic of Korea. A total of 86 Governments and 40 organizations, including relevant United Nations bodies and agencies, secretariats of major multilateral environmental agreements and other intergovernmental organizations, were represented at the meeting.

The main outcome of the Busan meeting was an agreement among Governments to establish a new intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services, which, in many ways, is expected to perform functions for biodiversity and ecosystem services similar to those performed by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change in respect of global climate change.

At the meeting, the representatives of Governments recommended that the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session should be invited to consider the conclusions set out in the Busan Outcome document and take appropriate action for the establishment of the platform. The recommendation of the Busan meeting is in conformity with decision SS.XI/4 of the UNEP Governing Council, by which the Governing Council requested the Executive Director to convene the Busan meeting to negotiate and reach agreement on whether to establish an intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services and to transmit the outcomes of the meeting to the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session for consideration during the high-level segment on biological diversity in September 2010 and thereafter. The Busan Outcome document further states that the UNEP

[a] Those agreements include, among others: the Convention on Biological Diversity; the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage; the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora; the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals; the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance Especially as Waterfowl Habitat; the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture; and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa.

Governing Council should invite the Executive Director, in cooperation with other United Nations bodies, such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the United Nations Development Programme, to continue to facilitate any ensuing process to establish a platform until such time as a secretariat is established.

In the context of the International Year of Biodiversity in 2010 and the high-level segment on biodiversity at the General Assembly in September 2010, it is of paramount importance for the international community to establish an intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services through consideration and appropriate action by the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session. Since this matter goes beyond the role and mandate of any single United Nations body or agency or multilateral environmental agreement and requires a holistic approach to promote international cooperation in this field, the General Assembly appears to be the most appropriate body to consider and set out the course of necessary international action to that end.

Annex II

Busan Outcome

The representatives of Governments at the third ad hoc intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder meeting on an intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services, convened in Busan, Republic of Korea, from 7 to 11 June 2010:

1. Recall decision SS.XI/4 of 26 February 2010, by which the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme requested the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme to convene, in June 2010, a third and final ad hoc intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder meeting to negotiate and reach agreement on whether to establish an intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services and to transmit, on behalf of the Governing Council, the outcomes of and necessary documentation from the third and final meeting to the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session for consideration during the high-level segment on biological diversity in September 2010 and thereafter;

2. Note the outcomes of the first and second ad hoc intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder meetings on an intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services, held in Putrajaya, Malaysia, from 10 to 12 November 2008, and in Nairobi from 5 to 9 October 2009, respectively;

3. Acknowledge the importance of terrestrial, marine and coastal, and inland water biodiversity and ecosystem services which, while critically important for sustainable development and current and future human well-being, particularly with regard to poverty eradication, are currently experiencing significant loss; also acknowledge that the science-policy interface on biodiversity and ecosystem services must be strengthened at all levels; and further acknowledge the importance of ensuring that the science made available is of the highest quality and independence, of enhancing cooperation with relevant United Nations bodies and of building capacity to mainstream biodiversity and ecosystem services;

4. Welcome the expressions of interests in supporting the proposed platform by the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and encourage further consideration of their roles by their respective governing bodies;

5. Note the interest of the United Nations Development Programme in the proposed platform and the important role of that organization in capacity-building within the United Nations system;

6. Conclude, having now reached agreement, as requested by the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme through its decision SS.XI/4, that an intergovernmental science-policy platform for biodiversity and ecosystem services should be established to strengthen the science-policy interface or biodiversity and ecosystem services for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, long-term human well-being and sustainable development, as follows:

(a) Focusing on government needs and based on priorities established by the plenary, the platform should respond to requests from Governments, including those

conveyed to it by multilateral environmental agreements related to biodiversity and ecosystem services as determined by their respective governing bodies. The plenary should welcome inputs and suggestions from, and the participation of, United Nations bodies related to biodiversity and ecosystem services as determined by their respective governing bodies. The plenary should also encourage and take into account, as appropriate, inputs and suggestions made by relevant stakeholders, such as other intergovernmental organizations, international and regional scientific organizations, environment trust funds, non-governmental organizations and the private sector. To facilitate this, and to ensure that the platform's work programme is focused and efficient, a process to receive and prioritize requests should be established by the plenary;

(b) The new platform should identify and prioritize key scientific information needed for policymakers at appropriate scales and catalyse efforts to generate new knowledge by engaging in dialogue with key scientific organizations, policymakers and funding organizations, but should not directly undertake new research;

(c) The new platform should perform regular and timely assessments of knowledge on biodiversity and ecosystem services and their interlinkages, which should include comprehensive global, regional and, as necessary, subregional assessments and thematic issues at appropriate scales and new topics identified by science and as decided upon by the plenary. These assessments must be scientifically credible, independent and peer-reviewed, and identify uncertainties. There should be a clear and transparent process for sharing and incorporating relevant data. The new platform should maintain a catalogue of relevant assessments, identify the need for regional and subregional assessments and help to catalyse support for subregional and national assessments, as appropriate;

(d) The new platform should support policy formulation and implementation by identifying policy-relevant tools and methodologies, such as those arising from assessments, to enable decision makers to gain access to those tools and methodologies, and, where necessary, to promote and catalyse their further development;

(e) The new platform should prioritize key capacity-building needs to improve the science-policy interface at appropriate levels and then provide and call for financial and other support for the highest-priority needs related directly to its activities, as decided by the plenary, and catalyse financing for such capacity-building activities by providing a forum with conventional and potential sources of funding;

(f) The new platform should be established as an independent intergovernmental body administered by one or more existing United Nations organizations, agencies, funds or programmes;

(g) The plenary, which should be the platform's decision-making body, should be open to participation by all States Members of the United Nations and by regional economic integration organizations. Intergovernmental organizations and other relevant stakeholders should participate in the plenary as observers, in accordance with the rules of procedure established by the plenary. Through its rules of procedure, the plenary should in general take decisions by consensus of Government representatives;

(h) One chair and four vice-chairs, taking due account of the principle of geographical balance among the five United Nations regions, should be nominated and selected by Governments which are members of the plenary. The criteria, nomination process and length of service should be decided by the plenary;

(i) A core trust fund to be allocated by the plenary should be established to receive voluntary contributions from Governments, United Nations bodies, the Global Environment Facility, other intergovernmental organizations and other stakeholders, such as the private sector and foundations;

7. Also conclude that in carrying out its work the platform should:

(a) Collaborate with existing initiatives on biodiversity and ecosystem services, including multilateral environmental agreements, United Nations bodies and networks of scientists and knowledge holders, to fill gaps and build upon their work, while avoiding duplication;

(b) Be scientifically independent and ensure credibility, relevance and legitimacy through the peer review of its work and transparency in its decision-making processes;

(c) Use clear, transparent and scientifically credible processes for the exchange, sharing and use of data, information and technologies from all relevant sources, including non-peer-reviewed literature, as appropriate;

(d) Recognize and respect the contribution of indigenous and local knowledge to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystems;

(e) Provide policy-relevant information, but not policy-prescriptive advice, mindful of the respective mandates of the multilateral environmental agreements;

(f) Integrate capacity-building into all relevant aspects of its work according to priorities decided by the plenary;

(g) Recognize the unique biodiversity and scientific knowledge thereof within and among regions, and also recognize the need for the full and effective participation of developing countries and for balanced regional representation and participation in its structure and work;

(h) Take an interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approach that incorporates all relevant disciplines, including social and natural sciences;

(i) Recognize the need for gender equity in all relevant aspects of its work;

(j) Address terrestrial, marine and inland water biodiversity and ecosystem services and their interactions;

(k) Ensure the full use of national, subregional and regional assessments and knowledge, as appropriate;

8. Further conclude that the platform's efficiency and effectiveness should be independently reviewed and evaluated on a periodic basis as decided by the plenary, with adjustments to be made as necessary;

9. Recommended that the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session should be invited to consider the conclusions set out in the present outcome document and take appropriate action to establish the platform;

10. Also recommend that the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme should invite the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, in cooperation with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the United Nations Development Programme, to continue to facilitate any ensuing process to implement the platform until such time as a secretariat is established.

Annex III

Draft resolution

Intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services

The General Assembly,

Acknowledging the importance of terrestrial, marine and coastal, and inland water biodiversity and ecosystem services which, while critically important for sustainable development and current and future human well-being, particularly with regard to poverty eradication, are currently experiencing significant loss,

Also acknowledging that the science-policy interface on biodiversity and ecosystem services for human well-being and sustainable development must be strengthened at all levels,

Further acknowledging the importance of ensuring that the science made available is of the highest quality and independence, of enhancing cooperation with relevant United Nations bodies and of capacity-building to mainstream biodiversity and ecosystem services,

Recalling decision SS.XI/4 of 26 February 2010 of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme by which the Governing Council requested the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme to convene, in June 2010, a third and final ad hoc intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder meeting to negotiate and reach agreement on whether to establish an intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services and to transmit, on behalf of the Governing Council, the outcomes of and necessary documentation from the third and final meeting to the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session for consideration during the high-level segment on biological diversity in September 2010 and thereafter,

Noting and welcoming the outcomes of the third ad hoc intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder meeting on an intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services, convened in Busan, Republic of Korea, from 7 to 11 June 2010, in particular the recommendations of the representatives of Governments entitled "Busan Outcome", as contained in the annex to the report on that meeting,

1. *Determines* that an intergovernmental science-policy platform for biodiversity and ecosystem services should be established as an independent intergovernmental body to strengthen the science-policy interface for biodiversity and ecosystem services for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, long-term human well-being and sustainable development, as follows:

(a) Focusing on Government needs and based on priorities established by the plenary, the platform should respond to requests from Governments, including those conveyed to it by multilateral environmental agreements related to biodiversity and ecosystem services as determined by their respective governing bodies. The plenary should welcome inputs and suggestions from, and the participation of, United Nations bodies related to biodiversity and ecosystem services as determined by their respective governing bodies. The plenary should also encourage and take into

account, as appropriate, inputs and suggestions made by relevant stakeholders, such as other intergovernmental organizations, international and regional scientific organizations, environment trust funds, non-governmental organizations and the private sector. To facilitate this, and to ensure that the platform's work programme is focused and efficient, a process to receive and prioritize requests should be established by the plenary;

(b) The platform should identify and prioritize key scientific information needed for policymakers at appropriate scales and catalyse efforts to generate new knowledge by engaging in dialogue with key scientific organizations, policymakers and funding organizations, but should not directly undertake new research;

(c) The platform should perform regular and timely assessments of knowledge on biodiversity and ecosystem services and their interlinkages, which should include comprehensive global, regional and, as necessary, subregional assessments and thematic issues at appropriate scales and new topics identified by science and as decided upon by the plenary. These assessments must be scientifically credible, independent and peer-reviewed, and identify uncertainties. There should be a clear and transparent process for sharing and incorporating relevant data. The platform should maintain a catalogue of relevant assessments, identify the need for regional and subregional assessments and help to catalyse support for subregional and national assessments, as appropriate;

(d) The platform should support policy formulation and implementation by identifying policy-relevant tools and methodologies, such as those arising from assessments, to enable decision makers to gain access to those tools and methodologies, and, where necessary, to promote and catalyse their further development;

(e) The platform should prioritize key capacity-building needs to improve the science-policy interface at appropriate levels and then provide and call for financial and other support for the highest-priority needs related directly to its activities, as decided by the plenary, and catalyse financing for such capacity building activities by providing a forum with conventional and potential sources of funding;

(f) The platform should be administered by one or more existing United Nations organizations, agencies, funds or programmes;

(g) The plenary, which should be the platform's decision-making body, should be open to participation by all States Members of the United Nations and by regional economic integration organizations. Intergovernmental organizations and other relevant stakeholders should participate in the plenary as observers, in accordance with the rules of procedure established by the plenary. Through its rules of procedure, the plenary should in general take decisions by consensus of Government representatives;

(h) One chair and four vice-chairs, taking due account of the principle of geographical balance among the five United Nations regions, should be nominated and selected by Governments which are members of the plenary. The criteria, nomination process and length of service should be decided by the plenary;

(i) A core trust fund to be allocated by the plenary should be established to receive voluntary contributions from Governments, United Nations bodies, the

Global Environment Facility, other intergovernmental organizations and other stakeholders, such as the private sector and foundations;

2. *Also determines* that in carrying out its work the intergovernmental science-policy platform for biodiversity and ecosystem services should:

(a) Collaborate with existing initiatives on biodiversity and ecosystem services, including multilateral environmental agreements, United Nations bodies and networks of scientists and knowledge holders, to fill gaps and build upon their work, while avoiding duplication;

(b) Be scientifically independent and ensure credibility, relevance and legitimacy through the peer review of its work and transparency in its decision-making processes;

(c) Use clear, transparent and scientifically credible processes for the exchange, sharing and use of data, information and technologies from all relevant sources, including non-peer-reviewed literature, as appropriate;

(d) Recognize and respect the contribution of indigenous and local knowledge to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystems;

(e) Provide policy-relevant information, but not policy-prescriptive advice, mindful of the respective mandates of the multilateral environmental agreements;

(f) Integrate capacity-building into all relevant aspects of its work according to priorities decided by the plenary;

(g) Recognize the unique biodiversity and scientific knowledge thereof within and among regions, and also recognize the need for the full and effective participation of developing countries and for balanced regional representation and participation in its structure and work;

(h) Take an interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approach that incorporates all relevant disciplines, including social and natural sciences;

(i) Recognize the need for gender equity in all relevant aspects of its work;

(j) Address terrestrial, marine and inland water biodiversity and ecosystem services and their interactions;

(k) Ensure the full use of national, subregional and regional assessments and knowledge, as appropriate;

3. *Requests* the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, in cooperation with the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, to make appropriate institutional arrangements to establish and support the intergovernmental science-policy platform for biodiversity and ecosystem services, subject to further consideration of the roles of these organizations by their respective governing bodies;

4. *Notes* that the efficiency and effectiveness of the intergovernmental science-policy platform for biodiversity and ecosystem services should be independently reviewed and evaluated on a periodic basis as decided by the plenary, with adjustments to be made as necessary;

5. *Calls on* Governments, relevant international organizations, including multilateral environmental agreements, and other relevant stakeholders to support the functions of the intergovernmental science-policy platform for biodiversity and ecosystem services and actively participate in its work.